Introducing CASA Classrooms: CASA Mental Health to Embed Services into Central Alberta Schools

CASA Mental Health is bringing mental health services directly to kids. We are pleased to introduce CASA Classrooms, a new model of school-based mental health service, in conjunction with the Government of Alberta Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, Ministry of Education and Albertan school divisions.

This February, CASA Classrooms will launch in two schools in Central Alberta: Wetaskiwin Outreach School and Red Deer's Escuela Vista Grande School.

"We are excited to partner with CASA Mental Health on a new classroom as we continue our commitment to fostering supportive learning environments for all students. By providing a dedicated space for mental health resources, we aim to create an inclusive atmosphere where students can thrive emotionally, socially and academically. This initiative reinforces our commitment to nurturing the holistic development of every student, ensuring they have the tools and support necessary for success."
-Chad Erickson, Superintendent, Red Deer Public Schools

"We look forward to this partnership with CASA Classrooms to support students who require mental health interventions to successfully engage in school."
-Jodie Mattia, Director of Support Services, Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

The program will address the need for services closer to students by bridging a child's mental health and school needs, through a coordinated approach by a mental health team and a teacher. CASA Classrooms are designed for students in grades four through 12 with mental health diagnoses. By providing mental health services directly in the school, there is no need for caregivers to schedule appointments and take time off work. Youth receive the support they need in a location already built in to their lives.

"In CASA Classrooms, students receive individual and group therapy, medical care and school programming to support their individual needs. We're also preparing parents to support them at home. Caregivers receive mental health education and connections to community supports. School staff will receive similar support to ensure the child's success in the classroom after the program ends."
-Dena Pedersen, Director, Clinical, CASA Mental Health

"I am excited to see more children and families able to access CASA Mental Health through CASA Classrooms. After many years as a principal, I saw firsthand the benefits of mental health classrooms. I also experienced the impact CASA makes on kids and families. CASA saves lives. School-based supports decrease the risk of treatment in hospitals by providing services in the setting where children and teens learn, grow and thrive."
-Janet Hancock, Board Chair, CASA Mental Health

"Our government is proud to have partners like CASA Mental Health that support the well-being and recovery of young Albertans. Expanding mental health programs like these classrooms is a priority for the province as we invest in prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery."
-Dan Williams, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction

Five CASA Classrooms are already serving kids and families in Edmonton, Gibbons, Fort Saskatchewan and Sturgeon County. CASA plans to continue expanding the program into Central, Northern and Southern Alberta, including Calgary, in the next two years as part of its five-year roadmap to improve the future of mental health service for children, youth and families in Alberta.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:
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About CASA Mental Health
CASA Mental Health is a non-profit, accredited provider of clinical mental health services, delivering holistic, culturally-safe wrap-around services to Albertans aged three to 18 and their families. CASA provides mental health service to the "missing middle" – therapeutic and medical treatment for children and youth, in between prevention and promotion in primary and community care, and acute treatment in hospital.

CASA's team of mental health professionals are trauma experts committed to delivering service in collaboration with community partners. This includes assessment and treatment for thousands of children, youth and families each year, from community outreach settings to intensive treatment programs.

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